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COUNTRY East Germany

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REPORT

TOPIC Military Information from Oranienburg

EVALUATION

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30 October 1953

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REMARKS

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1. On 9 October 1953, the Weisse Stadt settlement in Oranienburg was occupied by about 500 soldiers wearing red-bordered black epaulets with tank and artillery insignia. Some officers also wore blue-bordered black epaulets with signal and engineer insignia. Soldiers were seen preparing their beds and reconditioning their quarters at Buildings Nos 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13. At least 30 trucks were at the garage north of Ernst Thaelmann Strasse. Unusually many officers and uniformed women wearing red-bordered black epaulets were shopping in the town. [redacted] most of them were not familiar with the town.
2. On 9 October, the Weisse Stadt settlement was occupied, with the bulk of the troops quartered in the area south of Ernst Thaelmann Strasse and east of Friedrich Ebert Strasse. [redacted] soldiers reconditioning and polishing their quarters. There was no training activity. A wooden fence was built between the railroad line and Ernst Thaelmann Strasse on the west side of Friedrich Ebert Strasse. A barbed-wire fence was constructed from the north end of this fence along Ernst Thaelmann Strasse as far as the western edge of the installation. Garages Nos 30 and 31 sheltered tanks, mortars, motorcycles and rocket launchers. Several pontoons were stored in Building No 29; and a 37-mm AA gun was seen at garage No 35. About 20 soldiers cleaned machine guns in the open area in front of the garages. Motor vehicles [redacted] were seen at the installation.
3. On 11 October, Buildings Nos 8, 10 and 11 in the Weisse Stadt settlement were almost completely lighted. The gable sides of Buildings Nos 14 and 15 were also lighted. Buildings Nos 6 and 7 could not be seen. On 12 October, garages Nos 29, 29a, and 35 sheltered a large number of trucks. Between 6 and 8 guns were at Building No 35. A truck carrying billeting equipment stood in front of Building No 30. Eight large 200-liter barrels lay at the fuel depot. [redacted] red propaganda posters were again on and between the buildings.

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4. In the afternoon on 6 October, trucks [redacted] loaded with billeting equipment passed through Oranienburg, coming from the direction of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp and passing toward Schloss Oranienburg. Three rocket launchers moved toward the concentration camp in Sachsenhausen. A motor vehicle column consisting of 8 jeeps [redacted] and [redacted] trucks [redacted] each occupied by about 12 soldiers wearing red-bordered black epaulets, was seen at the Velten railroad station at 9 a.m. on 6 October.

5. On 8 October, part of Building No 12 in the Weisse Stadt restricted area was occupied by Unit Antopov for instruction purposes. Building No 14 which was scheduled for Unit Shuravkov was still unoccupied. Building No 15 was planned to serve as officers quarters and administration building for Unit Shuravkov. From 3 to 8 October, the army section and the air force section in the Weisse Stadt settlement were partitioned off by a wooden fence and a wire fence, 2.2 meters high.

6. From 28 September to 6 October [redacted] at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp [redacted] the 2 B was still occupied as previously. Building No 134 in the area 2 A was scheduled to be reconditioned as a hospital. Building No 144, which housed the heating and pump installation for the camp in its basement, was vacant and its doors were boarded up. Buildings Nos 141 and 142 were also vacant and their doors were boarded up. Eight soldiers repaired two T-34 tanks in Building No 149. Buildings Nos 143 and 143a served as tank garages and each sheltered five T-34 tanks. The large gates of buildings Nos 145, 146, 147 and 148 were boarded up. These buildings were interconnected by a large wooden fence, about 2.5 meters high and were vacant. Building No 142/44 served as officers kitchen and mess room for tank instruction units. Building No 38/40 housed the camp post office. Buildings Nos 30/32, and 34/36 were billets for officers of the tank instruction units. Buildings Nos 11, 13 and 15, which previously served as officers billets, were vacant. The large low wooden buildings Nos 159 and 160 were also vacant. Building No 84 housed the library. Building No 82 was occupied by officers of the tank instruction unit. Building No 86 was guard house of the tank instruction unit. Buildings Nos 88 and 92 were vacant and boarded up. Building No 90 was occupied by officers of the tank instruction unit. The north section of Building No 150 was occupied by personnel of the tank instruction unit and the south section quartered instruction rooms. Orderly rooms and switchboards were on the second floor. From 28 September to 10 October, four trucks of the drivers school unit daily practiced driving in the terrain beyond the cemetery. Source noticed no town drives. About 250 soldiers daily performed athletics in front of the barracks buildings in the morning, and about 100 soldiers of the tank instruction unit daily drilled in the afternoon. Trucks [redacted] each occupied by 20 soldiers wearing red-bordered black epaulets and tank insignia, left the barracks area toward the firing range near the Klinker-Werke. About 100 soldiers practiced aiming with T-34 tanks between the barracks buildings.²

7. From 28 September to 6 October, the commandant of Oranienburg drove sedan [redacted] Jeep [redacted] was assigned to the komendatura. On 2 October, trucks [redacted] each occupied by six to ten soldiers wearing red cap bands, parked in front of the komendatura. At about 4:30 p.m. on 26 September, 12 new [redacted] dark-green armored personnel carriers were unloaded at the Oranienburg railroad station. Four entered the gate beside Building No 86, and eight entered the gate at Buildings Nos 108 and 109, of the VP installation.³

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8. Since 4 October, the restricted Weisse Stadt area was occupied by about 1,000 soldiers. Buildings Nos 8, 9 and 11 were occupied to capacity by personnel wearing red-bordered black epaulets. Building No 7 quartered a guard detail of 10 soldiers wearing red-bordered black epaulets. Garage No 26 sheltered trucks. At 9:30 a.m. on 3 October, a barge moored at the Luise-Henrietten-Bridge. Soldiers wearing red-bordered black epaulets unloaded hill tiring equipment, clothing and mess kits from this barge. Trucks transported the equipment to the Weisse Stadt area.¹

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1. [] Comment. The occupation strengths at the Weisse Stadt area greatly varied and fluctuated between 500 and 3,000 to 4,000 soldiers. The actual occupation probably was between 1,500 and 2,000 soldiers in mid-October. Weapons and branch of service insignia again confirmed the 53th Mtrcl Bn, 16th (?) Mtrcl Bn, 194th Engr Bn, unidentified signal battalion and, vaguely, the 219th (?) AAA Regt, all of which belong to the 25th Tank Div. []
2. [] Comment. The occupation of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp remained unchanged until early October. []
3. [] Comment. Information on the arrival of armored personnel carriers for the Soviet Army and the KVP was repeatedly received.

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